

Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 17 November 1994

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statistics

Trend unemployment at lowest level for over three years

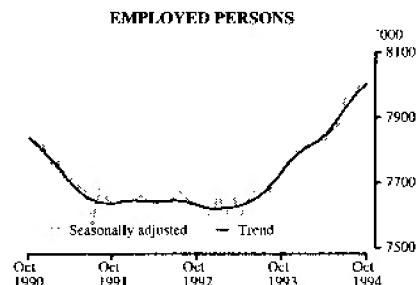
Trend estimates of both unemployment and the unemployment rate have reached their lowest levels since early 1991.

The trend in unemployment has been falling since September 1993 and stood at 817,500 in October 1994, the lowest level since May 1991. The trend estimate of the unemployment rate continued to fall and stood at 9.3 per cent, the lowest level since April 1991. The trend estimate of the participation rate rose slightly to 63.1 per cent, the highest level since June 1991.

In October 1994, the provisional trend estimate of employment rose to 8,005,600, 5.1 per cent higher than the January 1993 low point. Trend estimates of persons employed full time have been rising since September 1992 and in October 1994 stood at 6,072,700, the highest level in almost four years.

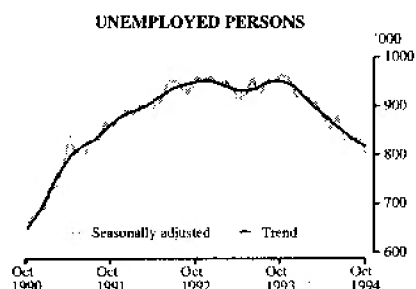
Employment

The seasonally adjusted estimate of employed persons for October 1994 fell to 7,998,900. Full-time employment fell by 42,200 to 6,054,400, with male full-time employment falling by 32,700 to 4,072,800. The seasonally adjusted estimate of females employed full time fell slightly to 1,981,600. Part-time employment rose by 31,300 to 1,944,600 in October 1994, with a rise of 41,400 in male part-time employment.



LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ESTIMATES
Seasonally adjusted

	Employed			Un- employed	Unem- ployment rate — per cent —	Partici- pation rate
	Full-time workers	Part-time workers	Total — '000 —			
1994						
May	5 981.7	1 881.3	7 863.0	851.8	9.8	62.6
June	6 012.1	1 869.9	7 882.0	877.7	10.0	62.9
July	6 034.7	1 937.5	7 972.2	833.9	9.5	63.2
August	6 027.2	1 907.0	7 934.2	831.5	9.5	62.8
September	6 096.6	1 913.3	8 009.9	836.1	9.5	63.3
October	6 054.4	1 944.6	7 998.9	804.7	9.1	62.9



Unemployment

In October 1994, the seasonally adjusted estimate of unemployed persons fell by 31,400 to 804,700. Male unemployment fell 23,600 to 468,500, with the number of unemployed males seeking part-time work falling by 11,200 to 46,400. Female unemployment fell to 336,200.

Unemployment rate

The October 1994 seasonally adjusted estimate of the unemployment rate actually fell 0.3 percentage points but because of rounding stood at 9.1 per cent, the lowest rate since March 1991. The unemployment rate for males fell from 9.7 per cent to 9.3 per cent while for females, the unemployment rate dropped slightly to 9.0 per cent.

Participation rate

The seasonally adjusted estimate of the labour force participation rate fell by 0.4 percentage points to 62.9 per cent in October 1994. For males, the participation rate fell by 0.3 percentage points to 73.4 per cent while for females, the rate fell by 0.4 points to 52.8 per cent.

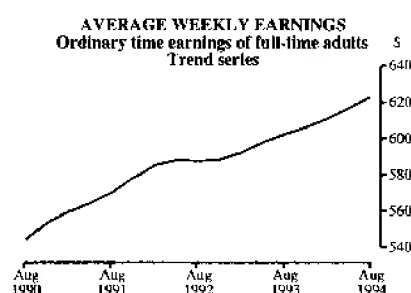
For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary* (6202.0), or contact Sylvia Sajler on (06) 252 6525.

Earnings rise strengthens

In trend terms, the upward movement in all earnings categories continued in August 1994, confirming the pattern which has been evident in each quarter since February 1993.

The trend estimates of average weekly ordinary time earnings for full-time adults rose 1.0 per cent in the three months to August 1994, contributing to an annual increase of 3.4 per cent. For this category in the year to August, male earnings rose by 3.1 per cent and female earnings by 3.9 per cent.

Total average weekly earnings, in trend terms, rose 1.3 per cent for full-time adults and 1.5 per cent for all employees between May and August 1994. The annual increase for these two categories of employees was 4.2 per cent and 3.7 per cent, respectively.

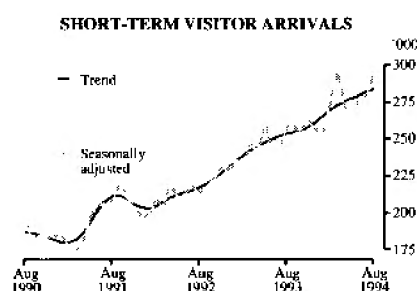


AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS, AUGUST 1994

	Average weekly earnings (\$)			Percentage change in 'Persons' from	
	Males	Females	Persons	August '93	May '94
Full-time adults — trend					
Ordinary time	658.80	557.10	622.90	3.4	1.0
Total	715.10	571.50	664.50	4.2	1.3
All employees	634.50	427.10	541.00	3.7	1.5
Full-time adults — original					
Ordinary time	655.80	553.70	620.00	2.9	0.4
Total	712.20	567.40	661.50	4.0	0.8
All employees	632.80	422.50	537.90	3.3	1.1

In all categories, trend estimates of the annual change to August were higher than the corresponding estimates for the year to May 1994.

Short-term visitor arrivals set a new August record



The trend estimate for short-term visitor arrivals in August 1994 increased 0.6 per cent compared with July 1994. This is the thirty-second consecutive month during which the trend estimate has increased. In seasonally adjusted terms, the increase in August was up 6 per cent.

The actual number of overseas visitors to enter Australia during August 1994 was 265,100, the highest number yet recorded for the month of August.

The August influx brought the total for the eight months from January 1994 to 2,110,800. This is an increase of 13 per cent over the corresponding eight month period in 1993 (1,875,000).

Seventy-nine per cent (1,672,300) of overseas visitors during the eight month period to August 1994 were tourists who reported their main reason for travel to Australia as being either 'holiday' (63%) or 'visiting relatives' (16%). A further 263,500 (12%) overseas visitors entered Australia for business purposes. This includes visitors who stated 'business' (10%) as their main purpose of journey and those who stated they were 'attending a convention' (1%) or 'accompanying a business traveller' (1%).

Short-term visits to Australia tend to be of very short duration, with 31 per cent of visitors arriving during the eight months to August 1994 intending to stay less than one week and 31 per cent intending to stay between one and two weeks. Only 38 per cent of all short-term overseas arrivals intended to stay more than 2 weeks.

In the eight month period January to August 1994 the top five countries of residence for overseas visitors were Japan with 23 per cent (477,400), followed by New Zealand (302,800 or 14%), The United Kingdom (197,100 or 9%), the United States of America (191,500 or 9%) and Singapore (100,100 or 5%). During this same eight month period, large increases were recorded for visitor arrivals from Korea (an increase of 86% over the eight months January to August 1993), Thailand (56%), Indonesia (54%), Taiwan (43%) and Ireland (42%).

Permanent settlers on the increase

The number of permanent arrivals in Australia in the first eight months of 1994 was 49,140, an increase of 15 per cent over the same period last year. The largest increases were for South Africa, which rose 163 per cent to 1,500, and Sri Lanka which rose 73 per cent to 1,210.

For further information, order the publication Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia (3401.0), or contact Jim Elliott on (06) 252 6671.

Building materials prices in check

From August 1994 to September 1994 prices of materials used in the construction of houses increased by 0.2 per cent while prices of materials used in other building increased by 0.1 per cent.

Over the year to September 1994, house building material prices increased by 2.9 per cent and prices of materials used in other forms of building increased by 2.0 per cent.

The monthly increase for house building materials was mainly a result of increases in prices for structural timber in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Also contributing to the upward movement was an increase for concrete tiles in Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart. Clay brick prices increased in Brisbane.

Major contributors to the overall increases for other types of building this month were higher prices for glass and aluminium screens and doors in Brisbane. Also contributing to the upward movement were structural steel and insulation prices in Adelaide.

PRICES OF BUILDING MATERIALS, SEPTEMBER 1994
Percentage change

City	House building		Other than house building	
	From previous month	From corresponding month previous year	From previous month	From corresponding month previous year
Sydney	0.1	3.1	0.0	2.3
Melbourne	0.2	3.6	0.0	1.4
Brisbane	0.3	1.3	0.5	1.4
Adelaide	0.2	2.4	0.3	2.2
Perth	-0.1	2.9	0.0	1.8
Hobart	0.3	3.6	0.1	0.6
Weighted average of six State capitals	0.2	2.9	0.1	2.0
Canberra	0.3	1.7	0.0	1.2

For further information, order the publications *Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6408.0)* and *Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6407.0)*, or contact Robert Adams (06) 252 6198.

Mineral exploration drilling methods used in Australia

Private sector companies spent \$284 million on direct drilling costs exploring for minerals in Australia during 1993-94. This represents 36 per cent of the total expenditure on mineral exploration in Australia for that year (\$793 million).

Of the main drilling methods used in Australia, diamond drilling accounted for \$132 million (46%) of this expenditure, reverse circulation drilling accounted for \$91 million (32%) and rotary air blast drilling a further \$40 million (14%).

The largest expenditure was \$192 million in Western Australia. This was more than two-thirds of the total drilling expenditure for Australia, and 42 per cent of all mineral exploration expenditure in Western Australia.

The average cost of drilling per metre was \$101 for diamond drilling, \$27 for reverse circulation drilling and \$9 for rotary air blast drilling.

For further information regarding expenditure on mineral and petroleum exploration, order the publication Actual and Expected Private Mineral Exploration, Australia (8412.0). For further information on drilling methods used for mineral exploration in Australia, contact Nicole Pikos on (089) 432 171.

Livestock product trends

☐ Wool receivals by brokers and dealers

The trend estimate for wool receivals by brokers and dealers has fallen for the sixth consecutive month. The trend estimate for September 1994 was 15.0 per cent below the March 1994 peak.

☐ Red meat

The trend estimate for red meat for September 1994 rose for the second month following the last trough in July. The September estimate is 2.3 per cent below the March 1994 peak. Trend estimates for beef, veal and mutton production continued to increase, whereas the trend estimates for both lamb and pig meat production continued to fall following peaks in June 1994 and March 1994 respectively.

☐ Chicken meat

The trend estimate for chicken meat production has continued the rise that commenced in May 1992. The overall increase in the trend estimate during this period (May 1992 to September 1994) was 19.1 per cent. The September 1994 trend estimate was 6.2 per cent higher than the estimate for September 1993.

☐ Whole milk intake

The trend estimate for whole milk intake for August has fallen for the third consecutive month following the increase from August 1993 to May 1994 of 12.7 per cent. The trend estimate for August 1994 was 10.7 per cent higher than the trend estimate for August 1993.

☐ Live sheep exports

The number of live sheep exported in August 1994 was 327,000, down 38.4 per cent from July. The unit value per sheep exported (\$32.38) was marginally higher than the unit value for July.

For further information, order the publication Livestock Products, Australia (7215.0), or contact Michael Slattery on (06) 252 5435.

Inquiries

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Finance in brief ...

☐ Personal finance

The provisional trend estimate for personal finance commitments for September 1994 was \$2,143.0 million, a decrease of \$16.4 million (0.8%) on August 1994 but an increase of \$239.8 million (12.6%) on September 1993.

Seasonally adjusted, personal finance commitments for September 1994 were \$2,117.4 million, an increase of \$3.0 million (0.1%) on August 1994 and an increase of \$199.1 million (10.4%) on September 1993.

☐ Commercial finance

The provisional trend estimate for commercial finance commitments for September 1994 was \$8,374.8 million, a decrease of \$17.0 million (0.2%) on August 1994 but an increase of \$975.6 million (13.2%) on September 1993.

Seasonally adjusted, commercial finance commitments for September 1994 were \$8,265.4 million, a decrease of \$384.5 million (4.4%) on August 1994 but an increase of \$1,155.8 million (16.3%) on September 1993.

☐ Lease finance

The provisional trend estimate for lease finance commitments for September 1994 was \$544.6 million, a decrease of \$2.7 million (0.5%) on August 1994 but an increase of \$92.4 million (20.4%) on September 1993.

Seasonally adjusted, lease finance commitments for September 1994 were \$544.2 million, an increase of \$44.2 million (8.8%) on August 1994 and an increase of \$117.2 million (27.5%) on September 1993.

These series are available on subscription to a special data service. For further information, contact Greg Smith on (02) 268 4788.

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Expected releases to 25 November

- 16** Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, September 1994 (6412.0; \$11.00)
- 17** Merchandise Imports, Australia: Balance of Payments Basis, October 1994 (5320.0; \$10.00)
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Import Price Index, Australia, September 1994 (6414.0; \$8.50)
- 23** Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, October 1994, Preliminary (9301.0; \$12.00)
- 24** Stocks, Manufacturers' Sales September Quarter 1994 and Expected Sales to June 1995, Australia (5629.0; \$11.00)
- 25** Private New Capital Expenditure, Australia, Actual and Expected Expenditure to June 1995, September Quarter 1994 Survey, Preliminary (5625.0; \$11.00)

Key national indicators	Period	Units	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
National accounts						
Gross domestic product (GDP(A)) at 1989-90 prices	June qtr 94	\$m	99 058	100 666	0.9	4.3
International accounts						
Balance on current account (b)	September 94	\$m	- 2 434	- 1 809	14	- 54
Balance on merchandise trade (b)	"	"	- 772	- 452	48	—
Balance on goods and services (b)	"	"	- 1 159	- 525	46	—
Merchandise exports	"	"	5 289	5 312	- 1	- 3
Merchandise imports	"	"	6 061	5 764	7	- 7
Net foreign debt	June qtr 94	\$m	161 524	n.a.	- 1.9	- 4.3
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	232 698	n.a.	- 0.2	5.2
Consumption and investment						
Retail turnover at current prices	September 94	\$m	8 766.0	8 874.9	1.6	7.9
New capital expenditure at current prices	June qtr 94	"	7 284	6 994	7	11.0
New motor vehicle registrations	September 94	no.	50 438	49 056	0.5	21.3
Production						
Manufacturers' sales at 1989-90 prices	March qtr 94	\$m	35 184	37 572	2.3	9.9
Dwelling unit approvals	September 94	no.	13 884	15 047	- 6.9	3.6
Building approvals	"	\$m	2 136	2 401	19.1	13.3
Building work done at 1989-90 prices	June qtr 94	"	6 643	6 303	—	2.7
Prices						
Consumer price index	June qtr 94	1989-90 = 100.0	111.2	n.a.	0.7	1.7
Articles produced by manufacturing industry (d)	August 94	1988-89 = 100.0	116.2	n.a.	0.0	0.7
Materials used in manufacturing industries	" 94	1984-85 = 100.0	125.6	n.a.	0.4	- 1.2
Labour force and demography						
Employed persons	October 94	'000	8 034.8	7 998.9	- 0.1	3.4
Participation rate ‡	"	%	62.8	62.9	- 0.4	0.0
Unemployment rate ‡	"	"	8.6	9.1	- 0.3	- 1.9
Job vacancies	August qtr 94	'000	68.7	65.2	23.0	75.2
Average weekly overtime per employee	"	hours	1.28	1.33	0.9	10.3
Estimated resident population	March 94	million	17.8	n.a.	0.3	1.0
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals	August 94	'000	265	295	6.1	14.1
Incomes						
Company profits before income tax (e)	June qtr 94	\$m	5 410	6 115	- 2.5	33.9
Av. weekly earnings, full-time adults; ordinary time	August 94	\$	620.00	622.20	0.6	2.9
Financial markets						
Interest rates (c) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills ‡	September 94	% per annum	6.10	n.a.	0.40	1.25
10-year Treasury bonds ‡	September 94	"	10.35	n.a.	1.00	3.50
Exchange rate — \$US (c)	September 94	per \$A	0.7414	n.a.	0.1	14

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (c) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (d) Later figures expected to be released Wednesday 16 November 1994.

(e) Later figures expected to be released Thursday 17 November 1994.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Percentage change from same period previous year

Key State indicators	Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New capital expenditure*	June qtr 94	25.2	0.3	12.3	5.2	10.5	- 34.8	n.a.	n.a.	16.8
Retail turnover (trend estimate)	September 94	8.9	8.4	8.2	6.6	7.2	3.2	n.a.	4.0	8.2
New motor vehicle registrations†	September 94	30.4	17.4	17.8	15.8	11.2	27.6	25.9	- 10.5	20.8
Number of dwelling unit approvals*	September 94	- 9.7	16.0	15.3	- 21.5	28.0	59.5	41.2	- 24.2	3.6
Value of total building work done	June qtr 94	- 1.3	- 0.4	9.1	- 6.1	23.8	14.2	42.9	- 2.7	3.9
Employed persons*	October 94	3.3	2.9	5.3	2.5	4.1	2.4	1.3	0.1	3.4
Capital city consumer price index	June qtr 94	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.7	2.2	1.5	1.7
Av. weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time)	May 94	3.9	3.6	2.6	1.8	3.0	3.2	1.2	2.6	3.5
Population	March qtr 93	0.8	0.2	2.6	0.5	1.4	0.2	0.9	0.6	1.0
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc.	June qtr 94	5.7	6.1	6.1	2.3	9.8	14.7	8.0	6.5	6.4

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 7). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important. The ABS should be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication.

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